

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 26597 131629Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 /016 W
-----077701 140023Z /64
R 131615Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8510

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 26597

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AL, CFED
SUBJECT: APPROACH TO ALBANIANS REGARDING
VERIFICATION OF DEATH: SUCCESS?

REF: A) PARIS 16520 B) STATE 94908 AND PREVIOUS

1. TO OUR GREAT SURPRISE EMBOFF WAS CALLED IN BY
QUAI'S ALBANIAN DESK THIS WEEK AND HANDED A COPY
OF THE ALBANIAN CERTIFICATE OF DEATH OF MRS.
NIFODORA BAFKA WHICH WE HAD SOUGHT IN VAIN TO OBTAIN
OVER THE LAST 10 MONTHS.

2. EVEN CURIOSER IS THE FACT THAT THE CERTIFICATE,
CAREFULLY TRANSLATED FROM THE ALBANIAN ORIGINAL INTO
ENGLISH ("...IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED THAT NIFHODORA
BAFKA IS CANCELLED BECAUSE HAS DIED...") WAS HANDED
TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN TIRANA FOR ATTESTATION ON
MAY 2, THAT IS A MONTH BEFORE THE QUAI OFFICIALLY
AGREED TO TRY TO HELP US IN THIS CASE.

3. THE QUAI'S ALBANIAN DESK (MADAME BATBEDAT)
HAS PROMISED TO MAKE FURTHER INQUIRIES OF THE FRENCH
EMBASSY IN TIRANA EXACTLY WHY AND HOW THE CERTIFICATE
CAME TO BE ATTESTED AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY, WHICH
EVIDENTLY SENT IT TO PARIS ONLY AFTER IT LEARNED
THAT WE WERE INTERESTED IN IT. FOR THE PRESENT
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BOTH MADAME BATBEDAT AND WE ASSUME THAT THE
BAFKA FAMILY MADE AN INDEPENDENT APPROACH TO THE
ALBANIANS, AS THE DEPARTMENT HAD EARLIER ADVISED;
THAT TIRANA, HEARING OF THE REPEATED EFFORTS WE
WERE MAKING IN THIS MATTER WITH THE ALBANIAN
EMBASSY, MAY HAVE PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER;AND THAT,
ARRANGING TO HAVE THE CERTIFICATE ATTESTED BY THE

FRENCH EMBASSY, TIRANA MIGHT HAVE WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT WE GOT OUR ANSWER TOO -- WITHOUT TALKING TO US ABOUT IT DIRECTLY.

4. OBVIOUSLY MUCH OF THIS IS CONJECTURE AND NOT MUCH SHOULD BE MADE OF IT. IT IS INTERESTING, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE ALBANIANS DID FINALLY REACT. MADAME BATBEDAT'S OVERALL CURRENT IMPRESSION IS THAT THEY ARE MORE NERVOUS THAN EVER AND PARTICULARLY APPALLED BY TITO'S TRIP TO MOSCOW AND WARM RECEPTION IN PEKING. THUS, WHILE THEIR SENSE OF SECURITY IS CONTINUING TO ERODE, THEY REMAIN CAUGHT UP IN THE STRAIGHTJACKET OF THEIR PAST. IT MAY WELL BE A TIME FOR FURTHER DELICATE AND SLOW PROBING.

5. WE ARE POUCHING THE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE TO NICK ANDREWS, EUR/EE, AND WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE BALKA FAMILY IN FACT ALREADY HAS OBTAINED THIS CERTIFICATE DIRECTLY AS WE SUSPECT -- WITH OR WITHOUT FRENCH ATTESTATION.
HARLAN

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